Field Report Fort Clatsop National Memorial, National Park Service

■ 1.0 Summary

The Fort Clatsop National Memorial (the Memorial) is a unit of the NPS. Congress established it in 1958 to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806). The mission of the Memorial is to "commemorate and preserve the story and significance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the site of its 1805-1806 winter encampment." The Expedition was one of the most significant events in the history of American expansionism and development. President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the newly acquired *Louisiana Purchase* and the land beyond to the Pacific Ocean. The Expedition, also referred to as the *Corps of Discovery*, established a winter camp at Fort Clatsop and brought back valuable scientific and cultural information on the plants, animals, and native peoples of the new territory.





The present day 125-acre Memorial consists of two sites – the encampment and the Salt Works. The sites contain replicas of the original Fort and Salt Works modeled after descriptions found in the writings of expedition members and other historical documents. The Salt Works site is believed to be located at or near the site where the Lewis and Clark Expedition boiled seawater in order to obtain salt needed for their return trip. Currently, visitation often reaches capacity in the summer months. Local traffic and congestion concerns are prevalent. Public transportation does not currently operate into and around the Memorial. The Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 2003-2006 is expected to double annual visitation. The Memorial and local partners have already submitted plans through the Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program to create an off-site parking and staging area as well as funding to operate a shuttle system.

The potential for implementation of an alternative transportation system (ATS) at the Memorial is limited for several reasons, primarily because there is a short-term need (by 2003) for improving the transportation system to support the Memorial's Bicentennial celebration. This funding schedule is on a quicker time-line than the expected funding schedule of the next transportation funding program. However, depending on demand and visitation after the Bicentennial, a long-term strategy would include securing funding to operate and expand the current shuttle service. The lessons learned from operating the shuttle service and the intermodal facility during the Bicentennial could also be refined and implemented in the long term to reduce congestion and limit the need to expand the Memorial's parking facilities.

■ 2.0 Background Information

2.1 Location

Both the Fort Clatsop encampment and Salt Works sites are located in Clatsop County, Oregon, on the Oregon Coast. The encampment is the original Fort site located south of the Columbia River on the west bank of the Lewis and Clark River. The Salt Works is located at Seaside, Oregon, approximately 15 miles southwest of the encampment. It is six miles from Astoria, five miles from Warrenton, Oregon, and 16 miles north of Seaside, Oregon. Access to the encampment is from Alternate 101 (also referred to as Business 101) and Fort Clatsop Road (see Figure 1). Major approach routes to the Fort are U.S. 101/Route 26 and Route 30 from Portland, Oregon. Lands surrounding the Memorial are bordered by Youngs River Road on the east and U.S. 101 on the west. U.S. 101 is a raised four-lane highway entering the area from the north that narrows to two lanes at Sunset Beach Road.

The Memorial is located within three miles of the town of Astoria. Astoria's current population is approximately 10,000 people. Astoria was the first American settlement west of the Rocky Mountains. The urban growth boundary for the city of Warrenton and the Astoria Airport are less than one mile from the Memorial. The majority of the land within Warrenton is designated as wetlands. Any potential growth or expansion of Warrenton would likely be towards the uplands located adjacent to the Memorial.

2.2 Administration and Classification

The Fort Clatsop National Memorial is under the jurisdiction of the NPS, Department of Interior. The lands within the Memorial (including the Salt Works site at Seaside) are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The entire site is zoned "historical," which defines the landscape as a cultural landscape within the NPS's Management Policies. The purpose of the historic zone is to preserve, protect, and interpret cultural and historical resources and their settings focused on the Fort.



Figure 1. Location of Fort Clatsop National Memorial

2.3 Physical Description

Of the designated 130 acres for the Memorial, approximately 125 acres contain the Fort Clatsop encampment site, and an adjunct 0.2 acres comprise the Salt Works. Visitor services are located within the 108-acre main unit and the 100 foot by 100 foot Salt Works Site unit located in Seaside, Oregon. The third unit of the Park is a 17-acre parcel of land located along the east shore of the Lewis and Clark River opposite of the main unit. This unit serves as a scenic backdrop for visitors at park interpretive sites located along the riverway.

Topography of the main unit varies from the relatively flat mudflats and estuaries of the Lewis and Clark Valley to the steeper forested slopes and benches of the eastern Clatsop Ridge. Elevation ranges from six feet to 60 feet above sea level. Due to the area's relatively high rainfall coupled with the large amount of moisture from the frequent fog, there are many surface streams and springs within this borderline temperate rainforest. Within the 125-acre main unit of the Memorial, there are at least 10 fresh water streams and many small isolated ponds. The best known of these streams and springs is the Historic Spring located near the Fort replica. This spring is believed to have been the principle source of drinking water for the Lewis and Clark Expedition during their stay at Fort Clatsop in 1805/1806.

Facilities at the main unit consist of a Visitor Center, the Fort replica, a picnic area, 1.18 miles of roadway, 1.5 miles of trailways, two parking areas, a maintenance facility, and two residences. No campgrounds or concession facilities are available in the Memorial. The Memorial has a picnic area with three shelters and 12 picnic tables. The picnic clearing is near the parking lots and surrounded by trees. It encompasses an area of approximately 5,100 square feet that is also accessible by trails. Once at the Fort, visitors gravitate first to the Visitor Center from the approach roads and parking lot areas. The main approach to the Salt Works includes the pedestrian and bicycle Promenade along the beach and roadways leading to Lewis and Clark Way. A closed shore pine canopy covers almost 75 percent of the site with a clearing over the monument structure and southwest area. Dense shrubs cover all areas surrounding the Salt Works monument and entrance path.

2.4 Mission and Goals of the Memorial

The mission of the Memorial is to "commemorate and preserve the story and significance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the site of its 1805-1806 winter encampment." Its goal is to preserve and provide the opportunity for visitors to safely experience and to understand the "inspirational human and environmental interrelationships of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, their daily life and challenges and the historical significance of their successful journey." Fort Clatsop preserves, protects, and restores the natural and cultural resources of the unit that best represent this setting.

2.5 Visitation Levels and Visitor Profile

Park visitation grew from 100,000 in 1980 to over 262,000 in 1990. Visitation peaked in 1991 (with 279,999 visitors) with the opening of new sites associated with the Oregon Trail celebration in eastern Oregon and other new tourist facilities along the Oregon coast. In 1994, annual visitation to the Memorial was approximately 194,110 (152,407 at the Fort and 41,200 at the Salt Works). Whether visitation to the Salt Works correlates closely with visitation to Fort Clatsop has not been determined. However, an informal survey in 1992 indicated that most visitors to the Salt Works had not visited Fort Clatsop.

Memorial staff has determined that the maximum daily holding capacity at the main unit to be 2,500 visitors. Currently, this capacity is reached during the summer months. In 1998, visitation was 234,505. The long-term trend is expected to show steady growth,

while Fort Clatsop is expected to be heavily impacted by the Bicentennial and the resurgent interest in the Lewis and Clark story. Projections indicate that the Memorial should be prepared for 400,000 to 500,000 visitors annually during the Bicentennial years from 2003 through 2006.

A typical visitor to the Memorial is most likely a non-resident tourist traveling along the Oregon coastline or a tourist coming from the Willamette River Valley area. The NPS Cooperative Park Studies unit at Oregon State University conducted a visitor survey in 1986, 1987, and 1988. This survey found that 37 percent of the visitors lived in states other than Oregon. Among Oregon residents visiting the Memorial, 44 percent were from the Portland metropolitan area and 48 percent were from other Willamette Valley communities. Ten percent were residents from within 30 miles of the Memorial. Five percent were from foreign countries.

In addition, close to 70 percent of the visitors surveyed were first-time visitors to the Memorial. More than half lived outside Oregon, primarily in Washington (35 percent) and California (13 percent). The survey also found that 60 percent of visitors were attracted to the Memorial because of their interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Another 12 percent had heard about the Park's programs and another 11 percent expressed a passing interest.

The 1986 survey also found that the average length of stay was 1.7 hours during the summer and 45 minutes during the winter. There was also a significant and growing visitor "shoulder season" during June and September. The ages of visitors to the Memorial ranged from 15 to 78, with an average of 45 years. Seventy-five percent of the visitors were in family groups. Among all groups, 20 percent were over 50 years old; 20 percent were between 30 and 50 years old, and nearly 30 percent were children under 12 years of age. About 13,000 visits to the Park were associated with commercial tours provided by chartered buses and cruise ships.

■ 3.0 Existing Conditions, Issues and Concerns

3.1 Transportation Conditions, Issues and Concerns

The Memorial has approximately 1.8 miles of paved surfaces, including roads and parking lots. The roads include a portion of Fort Clatsop Road, the entrance road to the Visitor Center, and three additional service roads. There are two parking lots including an upper and lower lot. The upper lot can hold 23 cars, 12 buses/RVs, and one additional handicap-accessible space. The lower lot, adjacent to the Visitor Center, has parking spaces for 30 cars, four buses/RVs, and two handicap-accessible spaces. There are approximately 1.5 miles of trails in the Park. Several trails lead to interpretive sites including a loop trail of roughly 2,200 feet that leads through the woods from the Visitor Center to the Fort replica and to the river at the Canoe Landing.

Visitor Center Handicap Parking Area



Visitor Center Parking Lot



Recently, forested and rural landscapes that have long dominated the area are being proposed for conversion to residential, commercial, and industrial land uses in the surrounding area outside of the Memorial. Specifically, lands around the community of Warrenton, and the area adjacent to the airport and other Port of Astoria lands have been slotted for redevelopment. There is also increased pressure along U.S. 101 south of Camp Rilea for ocean-oriented development.

These current and future land use trends are expected to affect lands adjacent to the Fort and may have a direct impact on traffic and circulation into and out of the Memorial. The U.S. 101 bypass (Business 101) around Astoria has contributed to Memorial impacts associated with congestion, traffic noise, and pollution. Traffic counts on U.S. 101 show steadily increasing traffic volumes. Average traffic on the Youngs Bay Bridge portion of U.S. 101 has been estimated to be around 20,000 vehicles per day with periodic queues of up to two miles (each way) in length.

The increase in visitors as a result of the Bicentennial is expected to further strain the capacity of the two-lane roadways near the Memorial. Other transportation access and circulation issues cited in the GMP include:

- Implementation of a safe trail crossing of U.S. 101;
- Completion of a bicycle route between Fort Clatsop and Fort Stevens;
- Improvement of vehicular traffic flow at the intersections of Marlin Drive/Crab Pot Way at U.S. 101;
- Implementation of bypass roads from U.S. 101 around Astoria and Seaside;
- Conduct detailed analysis of potential future transportation infrastructure proposals that may impact the Park; and
- Explore opportunities to expand bus service between Seaside and Astoria.

An important safety issue facing the Memorial considers a one-mile segment of Fort Clatsop Road. Fast-moving local traffic, including logging trucks, uses this roadway during typical conditions. This traffic mix imposes a danger for park visitors turning onto and off of Fort Clatsop Road. Pedestrians attempting to cross the road to access portions of the trail divided by Fort Clatsop Road are also at risk.

The sights and sounds of this through-traffic are quite noticeable and infringe on park visitors' natural and historical experience. One important option being considered is the relocation of the present through-road outside of the Memorial's boundary. This option will also consider the elimination of through traffic on Fort Clatsop Road.

There are also trail expansion issues facing the Memorial. Public Law 85-435 which established the Fort Clatsop National Memorial also called for the Park to include "...portions of the old trail which led overland from the fort to the coast." The Congressional mandate calling for linkage of "the Fort to the ocean" has not been implemented to date. To address this issue, the GMP proposed to establish a trail corridor between Fort Clatsop and the Pacific Ocean. There are two proposed trailhead areas associated with this trail. The first is on a tract of land adjacent to the current Memorial incorporating 80 acres, a small portion of which would be developed to provide a 23-vehicle parking lot, comfort stations, information kiosks, and bicycle racks. The second trailhead would be developed in collaboration with Clatsop County at Sunset Beach Park on the Ocean. This trailhead would include an 18-vehicle parking lot, comfort stations, bicycle racks, and signage. These plans are outlined in the Lewis and Clark Trail and Trailhead Development Concept Plan, which was included in the GMP. Through cooperative agreements with the State of Oregon and Clatsop County, the Park would secure a non-motorized trail easement to connect the expanded Memorial and Sunset Beach Park. Other important issues associated with the development of the trailhead plan include:

- The extent of private timber lands which must be acquired or otherwise protected to preserve immediate views from the trail corridors; and
- The need to provide a safe pedestrian crossing on U.S. 101 at a location which provides a link to the existing Oregon Coast Trail, access to the Salt Works site, and the beached whale site (referenced in the Lewis and Clark journals) at the present day Les Shirley City Park in Cannon Beach.

Other outstanding issues include the lack of public transit services from Seaside and Astoria to the Memorial. Currently, the Sunset Empire Transportation District does not provide public transit service between the two towns. With the coming of the Bicentennial, a public transit system will need to be implemented to carry visitors to the Memorial from adjacent communities. Furthermore, there is a multi-agency effort to create a regional transportation hub or intermodal center near the Astoria airport, approximately two miles north of the Memorial. The center will serve as the region's central staging point for buses, taxis, and private automobiles.

3.2 Community Development Conditions, Issues and Concerns

Fort Clatsop has a natural thematic tie with the region's historic resources, which are directly related to the Lewis and Clark story. The NPS actively engages public and private partners in resource protection, research, education, and visitor enjoyment activities that are consistent with park management objectives. The NPS is also actively involved in local, state, and national planning efforts to commemorate the Bicentennial. Historically, significant resources related to the Lewis and Clark Expedition and other historical themes have also been recognized as major tourist attractions by organizations with economic development interests. For example, the Clatsop County Economic and Development Commission identified the Lewis and Clark Trail as a high-priority tourism project in northwest Oregon. Furthermore, a master plan for the development and interpretation of the lower Columbia River route of Lewis and Clark has been completed for the three lower Columbia River counties of Multnomah, Columbia, and Clatsop by the Oregon Tourism Alliance and the Oregon Historical Society.

In addition, the area is expected to be heavily impacted by the upcoming Bicentennial celebration in 2003 through 2006. The Bicentennial is expected to bring more jobs and tourism dollars into the area. With such expectations, a major concern for the Memorial and the Clatsop County area as a whole is how to develop supporting services and infrastructure (such as hotels, restaurants, roads, public transportation, etc.) to meet the upcoming demand. With management responsibilities for key components of the Lewis and Clark story in the region, the Memorial is expected to participate in regional tourism-related planning efforts. An important issue will include the allocation of appropriate resources for the NPS to address both internal issues within park boundaries and outside issues that also impact the Memorial's present and future needs.

3.3 Natural or Cultural Resource Conditions, Issues and Concerns

The Memorial's *Resource Management Program* was implemented in 1992. A Resource Management Specialist was hired to oversee the natural and cultural resources of the Park. A big challenge for the Park at the time was limited resources to collect baseline data for management decision-making. Over the last few years, a large data collection effort of important and relevant resource inventories was implemented. The collection of this baseline data was a major focus of the Memorial's *Resource Management Program*.

An important natural resource issue is the introduction of foreign/alien wildlife species into the Memorial. The natural environment of the northern Coast Range of Oregon has witnessed tremendous man-made changes. Though small in size, Fort Clatsop contains a diverse wildlife habitat. There is a high percentage of forest bird species that prefer mature to old-growth forests. The oldest forests now in the region are located within the Park. Nevertheless, many introduced species are affecting this diversity. Currently, over one-third of the plant species within the Park are introduced/alien species. This has a serious affect upon the Memorial's natural resources and cultural landscape. While efforts are being made within the Park to control these alien species, many of these actions require a more regional, if not national effort.

A variety of activities outside of the Memorial, such as land-use conversions, new home construction, logging, agriculture, dairy operations, water diversions, and fertilizer and pesticide use, are believed to be impacting park water and wetland resources. The wetlands within the Memorial and the surrounding area have been dramatically altered due to historic land use activities, fills, impoundments, and water diversions.

Some of these earlier water diversions, fills, and other developments were also implemented within the area that later became the Memorial. Ongoing activities are underway to assess the degree of these impacts and to restore the wetlands (where feasible). Water resources within the Memorial have also been affected by activities outside of the boundary. The Memorial has just completed a park-wide water quality inventory. While the general health of park water is good, there are confirmed problems. The Lewis and Clark River does not meet several water quality standards established by the State of Oregon. Other water problems include a high fecal coliform count and an unexplained high level of Dioxins/Furans, which are harmful to the Salmon, Steelhead, and other fish resources.

Through the GMP, park management has identified protection strategies for the mitigation and preservation of park resources. A legislative initiative for a boundary expansion has been developed to ensure protective measures to mitigate the impact of 20th century sights, sounds, and encroaching facilities on the historic scene and landscape.

The maintenance and protection of cultural resources are also important elements of the GMP. An example is the Fort replica. The Fort's design was based on historical accuracy, not ease of maintenance or visitor safety. These limitations are magnified because of heavy visitation concentrated within such a small area. Many other parks and sites have higher visitation levels, but it is not concentrated into one building such as the Fort replica. These factors have an adverse impact on the Fort replica structure.

The Memorial also has a small, but important and diverse museum collection, including historical, ethnographic, archaeological, and biological objects. The general condition of the collection is good; however, there are many deficiencies. These deficiencies, as identified by the NPS, are primarily due to storage and museum exhibit areas being too small and not designed for future growth. The Memorial's archeological collection has been growing due to recent archeological excavations. Other contributing factors include the upcoming Bicentennial, an increase in scholarly research, and public attention of the Expedition.

3.4 Recreation Conditions, Issues and Concerns

The Memorial's main unit contains facilities for picnicking and hiking. A major recreational issue is the potential redevelopment and expansion of a trail network from the Memorial to the Pacific Ocean. The staff at Fort Clatsop has met with the Greenway to the Pacific Committee to identify a consistent plan. Although some major forest landowners in the County have open land policies for hiking, a few properties are now closed to public use. Public easement through private properties is an issue that the Memorial is confronted with regarding expansion of the trail system.

Another important safety issues concerns the park trail segment that is divided by Fort Clatsop Road. Currently, the crossing from one side of the road to the other is very dangerous. Bicycling is also becoming popular in the area. Independent races have been held near the Memorial and bicycling within Clatsop County is anticipated to grow in the future. The County's Bicycling Plan (Ordinance 93-25, adopted 27 October 1993) identifies several bike route proposals, including one, which is currently under development, between Fort Stevens State Park and Fort Clatsop. There are also needs for kayak and canoe launching areas south of the Memorial along the Lewis and Clark River. Currently, there are no designated launching areas along the river within the Memorial.

■ 4.0 Planning and Coordination

4.1 Unit Plans

An integrated planning approach is being adopted to guide the Memorial's resource management program. The *Resource Management Plan* and GMP were prepared to help meet the Park's dynamic management needs. An expanded and integrated pest management program was proposed to address exotic species and other pest problems. A vegetation management plan, building on previous landscape plans, will be developed to guide future restoration efforts and to address cultural/historic landscape, vegetative screening, and exotic vegetation management concerns. A fire management plan is also being prepared to address the potential of wildfires.

Although the Memorial has had a long-standing emphasis on historical interpretation of the Lewis and Clark story, various aspects of that story and ways of communicating it to the public have not been exhausted. The following are additional interpretive themes proposed in the GMP that could contribute to the public's greater appreciation and understanding of the Expedition's achievements:

- American Indian experiences with the Expedition;
- The "Fort Experience" of the Winter Encampment;
- Interpretation at the Salt Works Site;

- Nature interpretation at the Memorial;
- A cultural and natural museum collection for research and interpretive purposes;
- A Lewis and Clark Trail linkage for establishment between the Fort and the Pacific Ocean;
- Coordination with the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Office (Madison, Wisconsin) on all matters relating to the Trail; and
- Closure of the County-owned portion of Fort Clatsop Road for eventual conversion to the NPS.

4.2 Public and Agency Coordination

Within the region, considerable potential exists for the Memorial to cooperate with a variety of public and private entities. These agencies include the State Park Departments of Oregon and Washington, the Maritime Museum in Astoria, and the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation. Each of these agencies are currently helping to interpret the historically significant events and resources of the region. There are proposals for regional coordination for interpreting the Lewis and Clark story and other cultural themes within the region.

The NPS has also cooperated with local school districts to enhance the understanding and appreciation of significant historical events. Public education efforts are enhanced by the Memorial's support of such activities as the "Ranger on the Road" and "Parks as Classrooms" programs and other special educational events. Outside the region, the Fort Clatsop National Memorial has the opportunity to enhance coordination and cooperation with other Lewis and Clark commemorative sites, including the principal interpretive site at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Bicentennial would also provide an exceptional opportunity not only for regional intergovernmental and public-private cooperation but also for cooperation and coordination with other units of the National Park system, related Lewis and Clark sites, and other programs. The Memorial is a member of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in Oregon (LCBO) and the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Association (Astoria/Clatsop County), local committees that oversee and coordinate commemoration activities with local, state, and national groups.

■ 5.0 Assessment of Need

5.1 Magnitude of Need

Based on the Memorial's physical and capacity constraints and environmental and historical sensitivities, there is a need to manage visitor access. Since roadway access and parking is limited at the site, visitor arrival could be spread to reduce congestion and to

reduce peak demand for parking. Furthermore, since the Memorial is in a historically sensitive area and the goal of the site is to provide visitors with an environment that reflects a natural and historical setting representative of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, reducing the negative impacts of traffic noise should be addressed. With a projected doubling in visitation as a result of the Bicentennial, the need to manage demand into the Memorial as well as the entire Warrenton-Astoria area will be a necessity. The creation of an offsite intermodal facility to provide transportation alternatives for the Memorial and the area will need to be assessed.

5.2 Feasible Alternatives

The GMP proposed implementation of a shuttle bus/van service between the Fort and the Salt Works, and between the Fort and any proposed trailheads, canoe and kayak pullouts, and launch areas. The Memorial also recently submitted a proposal to the Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program to create an off-site staging, parking, and shuttle system to support the Bicentennial. This project totals approximately \$1.6 million. The elements of this proposal include:

- Improvements and enhancements to the road leading from U.S. 101 to Alternate 101;
- Construction (paving) of a five-acre parking lot to create 450 to 500 new parking spaces;
- Improvement of a four-acre parking lot and pull-out area for canoes and kayaks;
- Implementation of transportation services to trailheads from the proposed Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail;
- Purchase of two 30-passenger shuttle buses at \$150,000 per bus to be owned and operated by the Sunset Empire Transportation District;
- Construction of structures for shelter, restrooms, ticket sales, and visitor information at two sites; and
- Implementation of four advanced warning message boards.

Since it is likely that funding for the proposed shuttle system will be secured by the Bicentennial, there may not be short-term ATS needs associated with the Memorial. However, depending on demand and visitation after the Bicentennial, there may be long-term ATS needs. A long-term strategy for the Memorial could be to secure funding to continue to operate the shuttle service after the conclusion of Bicentennial activities in 2006. As visitation increases and parking capacity at the Memorial is reached, the Memorial could also secure funding to continue operation of the off-site parking and staging area. This intermodal facility could be used to "regulate" the number of visitors entering the Fort facility at any one time and in particular, during peak periods. Perhaps the lessons learned from operating the shuttle service and the intermodal facility during the Bicentennial can be modified and implemented in the long-term to reduce congestion and limit the need to expand the Memorial's parking facilities.

■ 6.0 Bibliography

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■ 7.0 Persons Interviewed

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